



BINEGAR PARISH COUNCIL Annual Report 2017-18

A highlight of our year was the dedication of the **Cemetery lych gate**, built by local craftsmen. A generous donation from Mr and Mrs Wilcox paid for the work. Many admire the gate that makes a graceful cemetery entrance. The Parish Council was able to invest in a smart, new boundary fence to complement the gate.

This year, we spent thousands we fundraised last year! The **playground** benefitted most with an exciting new multiplay and bright yellow 'zingos' for the little ones. The red train also got a fresh safer surface. Thank you *National Lottery, Sperring Trust* and the host of other donors. We monitor playground safety and must thank our volunteers. Will you help and join our rota?

What fun we had at our July **Let's Celebrate!** It brought us all together and honoured our Boer War hero, Henry Martin. Robert Wilcox and Andy Sanders educated us with the story of Rorke's Drift, we watched *Zulu. Zulu Dawn* and *Lion King* and threw a big party. Thank you *National Lottery*, Jon Abbott and his team!

At our last Annual Meeting, you said **road safety** on Gurney Slade's A37 was the priority. It took the year to get a grip on this. Do anything to a road and you get tied up in red tape! We bid for a highway improvement scheme; sadly, we failed. However, we did smooth the way for new village name signs, accurate speed data and better pedestrian safety. Practically, we opened up a route from the A37 crossing along Woodside Terrace that, for the first time, gives wheelchair users safe passage towards the Memorial Hall.

A few villagers gave their time freely to **Clean for the Queen** last autumn and this spring. Organiser Phil reported that parts of the villages were cleaner than last year but Colin Maidment showed how A37 drivers still dump loads of rubbish.

We know **Kevin Seymour** best as our postman for nine years. In October, County Chairman William Wallace gave Kevin Somerset's *Service to the Community Award*. Kevin's cheerful attitude, helpful approach, kindness and concern made him both an honorary parishioner and a worthy award winner.

Work continued under John Scadding (with Paul Sharp, footpaths officer) at **Binegar Bottom** John worked with the *Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group* to plan works to create so-called leaky ponds. By managing peak surface water flows, they will help prevent flooding downstream in Gurney Slade. John won a £4,000 grant from *Somerset Rivers Authority* to carry out the work.

Our aim is to improve where we live. Often this means **small things**. This year, Cath organised free NHS health checks; Philip and Gus Halfhide sprayed herbicide on roadside weeds; David started to negotiate an important extension to our footpath network. We got dozens of potholes fixed, took away the traffic island eyesore by Gurney Slade stores and planted it with flowers, kept the cemetery and churchyard mown, renovated three public benches and saved the phone box at Binegar Green!

Mendip District Council consult us on **planning applications** and, on average, we consider one at each meeting. Where a proposal is controversial, we ask for your help. Last year we fought off a speculative housing development but feared the plan might return. It has.

Looking after your interests means scrutinising plans like the one from **Somerset Fire & Rescue**. It puts forward radical changes but ones, we concluded, that meant faster responses in country areas.

Mendip listened to our proposals for the future **development of the village**. Its *Local Plan part II*, published in January 2018, agrees the villages cannot take major development. The plan is now with government inspectors. We hope all goes well allowing Mendip to bring the plan into force this year.

Finally, we must thank Diane, our Parish Clerk, without whom none of this would have happened.

From your parish councillors

Jon Abbott, Philip Blatchford, Richard Higgins, Cath Law, Phil Roberts, John Scadding, David Stone